



FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

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March 17, 2008

The Honorable John Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Timothy Murphy
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Representative Murphy:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus, a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, to offer our full support for the “Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act” (H.R. 5613), legislation to impose a one-year moratorium on the implementation of a host of regulations proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The CMS regulations would reverse longstanding Medicaid policy and would jeopardize access to health care for scores of low-income children. We applaud your leadership in introducing this legislation and will do all we can to support your efforts. We strongly believe that no child in America who is currently covered under SCHIP or Medicaid should lose their health coverage or access to care as a result of CMS’ recent regulatory actions.

As an organization committed to improving health care for all children, we are especially concerned about the impact of the regulations on vulnerable children. Just last week, First Focus released a report, “CMS’ Medicaid Regulations: Implications for Children with Special Health Care Needs” The report, which was authored by Professor Sara Rosenbaum, Chair of the Department of Health Policy at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Care Services, found that CMS’ recent series of regulations would have a disproportionate impact on children with special health care needs. This population of children, which includes those with chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions, or who require health care beyond that which is considered routine, typically have a high reliance on Medicaid and would bear the brunt of CMS’s proposed actions. In addition, the regulations would set aside longstanding Medicaid policy which ensures that special needs children have access to the comprehensive health care services they need to maintain or improve their health status.

We applaud your leadership in introducing H.R. 5613 and we are sincerely grateful for all of your efforts to protect health care access for our nation’s most vulnerable populations, including most urgently, low income children. In closing, we welcome the opportunity to work with you on this and other proposals to address the health care needs of our nation’s most precious resource, our children.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley
President